



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT
WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP AWARD TO KANSAS POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

Deputy Secretary of the Interior Frank A. Bracken today presented The Kansas Power and Light Company the prestigious Corporate Wildlife Stewardship Award from the Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Bald eagles, kestrels, peregrine falcons, ducks, geese, and a host of other wildlife are finding Kansas a friendlier place to live due to conservation efforts by The Kansas Power and Light Company," Bracken said. "Your efforts on behalf of our Nation's wildlife typify the volunteer spirit envisioned by President Bush."

Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Mike Hayden and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director John Turner also participated in making the presentation to John E. Hayes, Jr., Chairman of Kansas Power and Light.

"From my days as governor of Kansas, I remember Kansas Power and Light as a strong force for wildlife conservation," said Hayden. "I am delighted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized the company with such a high honor. It is certainly well-deserved. I hope more companies will factor wildlife conservation into their operations and decision-making process."

"Kansas Power and Light has established a high standard for corporate citizenship and involvement in wildlife conservation," Turner said during a ceremony at the Jeffrey Energy Center near St. Marys, Kansas. "The utility has established a task force with the goal of making environmental protection a part of day-to-day operations. In addition, it has undertaken a number of separate wildlife conservation projects and, in doing so, developed a model program for other companies to follow."

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"It's a mistake for any company to think of itself as just a business -- we are also citizens," Hayes said. "We have both a desire and an obligation to be good stewards of the land and help make Kansas and neighboring states better places to live for both people and wildlife."

Turner presented Hayes a painting of snow geese flying at Jeffrey Energy Center. This painting was created by award-winning artist Jerry Thomas of Manhattan, Kansas. Thomas was the 1988 Kansas Wildlife Artist of the Year and designed the 1992-1993 Kansas State "Duck Stamp."

Recent Kansas Power and Light projects include restoration of important wetlands, recycling of waste materials, and construction of nests and roosts for raptors along transmission lines.

Kansas Power and Light is the third recipient of the Corporate Wildlife Stewardship award, established in 1990 to recognize corporations making outstanding contributions to conservation and management of the Nation's wildlife, as well as enhancing the environment in general.

The site of the ceremony was significant because the company recently joined with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Fish and Wildlife Service to undertake resource development projects at the Jeffrey Energy Center, including two fishing lakes with boat ramps and a new fishing pier accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Other significant projects cited by the Service in making the award to Kansas Power and Light include:

- Survey crews worked with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and Ducks Unlimited to transform a 1,100-acre former oil and gas field into a wetland for waterfowl along the Verdigris River near Nowata, Oklahoma. The company donated engineering and land management expertise, manpower, equipment and materials.

- Employees at the company's Lawrence Energy Center constructed an eagle rehabilitation flight pen for WILDCARE, an organization in DeSoto, Kansas, that treats and rehabilitates injured, sick, and orphaned wildlife.

- The company worked with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to restore wetlands along Slate Creek, south of Oxford, Kansas.

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-- The company developed an extensive recycling program for fly ash (residue from burning coal), ground-up tree clippings, scrap metal, used tires, oil, batteries, and other waste.

-- The company constructed roosts for large birds such as eagles to prevent deadly contact with power lines and nesting boxes along transmission lines for kestrels. It also participates in a three-year-old program to improve grasslands on company-owned land.

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